



Wisconsin Department of
Health and Family Services

Preventing the Spread of Influenza in a Work Setting How You Can Help

Influenza (the “flu”) is a viral illness that is spread from person to person when people cough or sneeze near each other. The best way to prevent serious illness from the flu is to get immunized. In the past, health officials encouraged all persons over the age of 6 months to receive the “flu shot.” Because there is currently a shortage of vaccine, only persons at high risk for complications of flu should be immunized. It is important to follow

the guidelines listed below to help protect you and others from getting the flu. For more information, visit the website of the Department of Health and Family Services at: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/influenza>.

Immunization (Flu Shot)

All persons in the following categories should be immunized:

1. Adults aged 65 and over.
2. Children 6 to 23 months old.
3. Adults and children with chronic medical conditions.*
4. Women who are pregnant during the flu season (October- March).
5. Children age 6 months to 18 years on chronic aspirin therapy.
6. Healthcare workers involved in direct patient care.
7. Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children younger than 6 months.

* People with chronic medical conditions include those who have required regular medical follow-up or hospitalization during the preceding year because of chronic metabolic diseases (including diabetes mellitus), renal dysfunction, hemoglobinopathies, or immunosuppression (including persons with suppressed immunity caused by medications or by human immunodeficiency virus [HIV]).

Coughing and Sneezing

Employees should practice good health habits when coughing or sneezing by:

1. Covering the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
2. Immediately discarding used tissue in a waste container.
3. Washing hands (as outlined below) immediately after disposing of tissue.

No one should share drinking cups, water bottles, eating utensils, or any other items placed in another person's mouth.

Washing Hands

Where there are sinks, plenty of soap and paper towels should be available.

To help protect against illnesses like the flu, everyone should their wash hands:

1. After coughing or sneezing or whenever fingers touch the inside of the mouth or nose.
2. Before preparing food.
3. Before and after eating.
4. After hands touch another person who has a cough or cold.
5. Whenever hands are not clean.

Hands should be washed with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds, with rubbing action, then rinsed, and dried with a paper towel. A clean paper towel should be used to turn off water faucets.

Cleaning your hands with an alcohol gel (like Purell®) is an effective and convenient alternative to using soap and water. Tissues, waste containers, and alcohol gel should be conveniently located in work areas for used by employees and others.

Staying Away from Work When Sick

Persons who develop symptoms of influenza (fever, chills, sore throat, cough, headache, muscle aches) while at work should go home as soon as possible.

- If ill persons are not able to go home right away, they should be confined in a separate area away from others.
- Persons with influenza should stay at home for at least 5 to 7 days after onset of symptoms.